**Around Town**

**A TRIPLET IN BELLE VILLE**

Los Angeles was looking good this spring, as three local fashion events brought out the primped and the prepped.

By Rose Apodaca Jones

**School Spirit**

Clodly Crawford, in a sexy powder pink dress designed by Otis School of Fashion grad Melissa Mayon, grabbed attention from many of the 1,000 students and guests at the school’s May 1 benefit and fashion show gala at the Beverly Hilton. However, the spotlight and enthusiasm soon turned to the runway, where the results of a year’s hard labor by students and their established designer mentors garnered plenty of applause.

“This is some of the best student work I’ve ever seen,” said New York-based Isabel Toledo, who was back again mentoring Otis students, although this time in collaboration with a science team from UCLA. Their combined technological efforts are on view through the summer at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

And the more commercially viable mini collections overseen by other mentors showed great potential. Sean John’s design director Scott Langton admitted a few student-designed looks made it into the house’s fall collection back in New York.

Toledo and Langton weren’t the only ones who came from afar; Ghost’s Tanya Sarne flew in from London, Cosabella’s Patricia Marquis and several top executives came from Milan and designers from Nike Goddess dropped in from Portland. And there was plenty of local support, too, including Michelle Mason, Henry Duarte, Rod Beastie of La Blanca and David Meister, as well as designers from Target, Op, Volcom, Disney and Mattel’s Barbie.

The event raised $1 million for scholarships, a record for the 86-year-old school. About 78 percent of Otis’ 3,500 students rely on financial aid, and minorities make up 42 percent of enrollment.

The evening also honored Lunada Bay chief executive officer and president Susan Crab and Warnaco president Roger Williams for their involvement in the Otis fashion program. There was a posthumous tribute to attorney Stuart Buchalter, chairman of the Otis board of trustees.

**Past Perfect**

Designers love a creative challenge, and several locally based stars, including Richard Tyler, Louis Verdad, Jennifer Nicholson and Cosa Nostra, got just that when they were asked to revamp thrift shop finds for the Vintage L.A. Fashion Show, held April 24 at the New Mart downtown. The lunch-auction of these “repurposed” clothes raised some $100,000 for the Salvation Army’s Alegria housing project benefiting low-income families coping with AIDS/HIV.

“People living with AIDS and HIV have really fallen off our radar given the current political climate,” lamented host Minnie Driver, who opted for a new halter dress by L.A. designer Maria Bianca Nero. “We need to remember what’s on our doorstep.”

**In Store**

Tadashi Shoji realized his dream to showcase his full collection — and open his first signature store — with a runway show and party held April 22 to celebrate the new Tadashi boutique at South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa, Calif. Friends and fans spilled out into the Carousel Court inside the shopping center to watch the full range of Tadashi’s work, including separates, evening dresses, footwear, handbags and, exclusive to the store, jewelry.

The Los Angeles-based brand, which counts among its clients National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, is available in 700 department and specialty stores nationwide and intends to add another 10 namesake doors in the next five years.